



Charity No. 1124762

West Sussex Guitar Club AGM
Saturday 9th September 2023
at Regis School of Music at 7.10 pm

Club Officers present:

Julian Bobak (Chairman/Charity Officer/Librarian) JB	Debbie Burford (Secretary) DB
Sasha Levtov (Artistic Director) SL	Teresa Henley (Publicity Officer) TH
David Clarke (Treasurer) DC	Baz Boxall (Membership Secretary) BB

In addition to the club officers above, this meeting was attended by David Alexander, Ann Alexander, Morgan Andrews, Ian Barnett, Rachel Boxall, Sofia Carson, Elaine Foakes, Stephen Frith, Harri Goldsmith, Diana Green, Jay Huff, Linda Kelsall-Barnett, Evelina Kisliak, Andrew Richardson, Vakaris Silaikis, Ben Ward, Tanya Ward, Jon Ward, Phil Wilson and Terry Woodgate.

1) Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Leigh Boyle (Website Administrator) and John Mason.

2) The Minutes of the last AGM

The Minutes of the 24th September 2022 AGM were approved as a true record.

3) Chairman's Introduction

Julian Bobak welcomed club members to our ever popular AGM at the end of the 30th season of the WSGC. We are also celebrating our Pearl Anniversary (thank you all for wearing your pearls!) and we have splashed out on a special cake and some balloons.

JB summarised the activities throughout the year, including professional recitals by Xuefei Yang, the Serenata Trio led by John Mills, the Mela Quartet, the Housden-Tarlton Duo and Zoe Barnett. We have also had numerous club evenings, our orchestras have played at various concerts throughout the South and we have staged our own West Sussex Guitar Festival as well as the guitar section of the Chichester Festival of Music, Dance and Speech.

Many thanks go to our Committee, Sasha Levtov (Artistic Director), Debbie Burford (Secretary), David Clarke (Treasurer), Baz Boxall (Membership Secretary), Teresa Henley (Publicity), Jez Rogers (Webmaster in New Zealand) and Leigh Boyle (Web Assistant). Grateful thanks also goes to our regular helpers Nina Levtov and Evelina Kisliak. In addition special thanks goes to Stephen Frith who, as a luthier, has made three fine classical guitars which he has gifted to the club and today he has given a fourth guitar to us! We have therefore introduced the Stephen Frith Scholarship Award, whereby we loan these guitars to young up-and-coming guitarists, giving them a chance to develop their playing on a superior instrument.

Finally, JB wished to thank our sponsors, Bognor Regis Town Council, George Ide LLP, Little Florist (who supply our magnificent floral decorations) and the Regis School of Music. JB mentioned the Membership Details Form (MDF), which all members had received, and the fact that we have had to increase our annual membership fees by £5 for the first time in years. This is due to the significantly increased costs of our professional concerts and he pointed out that in the MDF you can make donations to the club on which we can claim Gift Aid. He thanked all those who have donated this year - donations are much appreciated and enable us to afford our professional concerts.

We look forward to our 31st year with our first professional concert on 30th September by Judicael Perroy and Natalia Lipnitskaja, two world-renowned guitarists. We hope you continue to support these first-class performances.

4) Matters Arising from the last AGM

None.

5) Receive the Artistic Director's Report

Members had received by post the Artistic Director's report of the Club's 30th season which SL said was easily the busiest year in the life of the club with so many superb artists performing. He continued that we have a healthy membership of over 100 and the club is fully inclusive not just for guitarists but for those who love the guitar. We staged two full-sized concerts outside our own home (St. George's Church and Christ Church in Chichester) which show that our own performing guitarists are the "special power of the club".

But for any society how can we build our future? All of us are a year older and we need more young people. However, several of the new generation have joined the club and it is so important for the club to be a good influence

on these young performers. How lucky we are then to have long-standing member Stephen Frith who has donated four hand-made instruments for our young performers to use. The guitars will be an asset of the club and passed to our new generations.

Finally, SL thanked all our committee – there is lot of preparation backstage without which he would not be able to continue to put on all these events. He looked forward to the 31st year of the club and was thanked by JB.

6) Adoption of the Club Accounts

Members had received by post the Financial Report for the period 1/8/2022 to 31/7/2023, compiled by David Clarke, showing total funds of £7925.43 (as of 4/8/23). DC was pleased that after such a busy year the club was still solvent! This figure was only £865 down on the previous year and today the bank balance was back to £8571.64. DC continued that all events are subsidised by the club and eventually the losses would be unsustainable which is why we have had to put up the membership fees by £5 this year, which will bring in an extra £400 to £500. DC added that at some point we may also need to increase our ticket prices for recitals but we never expect to break even due to the high quality of the artists we get. He would like to thank members who have added donations to their membership fees which allows us to claim Gift Aid. He was pleased to report that Bognor Town Council had given the club another £1000 grant this year and there was also sponsorship of £500 from George Ide LLP (arranged by JB) and £100 from Equilibrium (through David Alexander). DC would like to thank Linda Kelsall-Barnett for organising our orchestra to perform at two public concerts which raised £207.63 for the club.

In conclusion, DC mentioned “easyfundraising” through which it is very easy for members to raise funds for the club if they, for example, do online shopping or book holidays or insurance online. He said there are currently only 10 members taking part but they raised around £95 for the club in the last year. The club was in a strong financial position as long as we maintain it and get more sponsorship. The statement of accounts was approved and adopted at the meeting.

7) Election of Club Officers

JB stated that all had agreed to carry on and the committee was voted in as follows:

Julian Bobak	Chairman /Charity Officer/Librarian	David Clarke	Treasurer
Sasha Levtov	Artistic Director	Debbie Burford	Secretary

For the non-committee posts, Baz Boxall would continue as Membership Secretary, Teresa Henley as Publicity Officer and Leigh Boyle as Website Administrator. Jez Rogers would continue to look after the club's website and Julie Insull our Facebook profile.

Vacant posts remain for Hospitality Officer and Photographer/Archivist and JB encouraged “anyone of that bent” to let us know.

8) Membership Secretary's Report

Baz Boxall reported that the main thing was the club was currently installing a new database to replace the one set up years ago by Jez Rogers. For modern data privacy laws we needed a more modern database, he added. The return of the Membership Details Forms was a key part for everyone to agree to us holding their data so that they can be contacted. BB made a plea for all to send back the forms in the SAE provided. On the new system, members will be able to log on and update their own details and new members will be able to apply and pay online. Standing orders, cheques and cash will still be accepted. The new system will be able to automate renewals too. JB thanked BB.

9) AOB

David Alexander (DA) firstly wished the club a Happy 30th Anniversary and said 30 years ago he nearly joined and wished he had because we were a “swell group of people”. He said that Equilibrium had again this year made a donation to the club and joked that there was yet more good news – he hadn't brought his guitar tonight! But he did wish to point out two matters. (1) He had offered the club the facilities of a first-class recording studio that he has access to and it had taken a lot of work through Equilibrium to get a discounted price. (2) At the AGM in 2022 he had offered to help with fund-raising and mentioned his contact with Samantha Muir, a guitarist/ukulele player with millions of online views. DA said that Samantha would be happy to come to the club and that Equilibrium would fund the concert as a way of raising money for the club. DA explained that Equilibrium is not a charity, it is “an order” where members give part of their salary, but it supports charities. A whole year after he made these offers he heard nothing from the club and nothing had happened - he feels “we stand in our own way” and it had left him in a somewhat embarrassing situation regarding Samantha. In reply JB said that we did discuss the recording idea but thought there would not be enough circulation for any CDs made. JB also apologised for not getting back to him about the concert fund-raiser but said the offer was much appreciated. JB had in fact spoken to Samantha Muir who couldn't do the initial dates SL suggested but JB reassured DA that she is on the list for the next season. DA looked around at the committee and said that he was nearly seventy too and asked, “Do you have understudies? Who will take over? You need young people.” DA's first words this evening had been that he tended to see things in black and white and, as the meeting came to a close, SL said he hoped the WSGC had made his, and indeed everyone's life, more colourful.